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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA POLITICAL NEWSLETTER AUGUST 16-AUGUST 22

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¶1. (SBU) This was written in partnership with the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau. The newsletter is open to contributions from officers in the Embassy or in the Consulates who wish to highlight political trends. Contact Madeline Seidenstricker or Jonathan Smallridge for more information, or to make contributions. The newsletter also is available on the Political Section's blog, "A View from South Africa," found on intelink.gov.

International News

Zuma Visit to Angola

¶2. (U) President Jacob Zuma from August 20 to 21 traveled to Angola on his first state visit. Delegates included: International Relations and Cooperation (DICO) Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Home Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Sport and Recreation Makhenkesi Stofile, Minister of Public Enterprises Barbara Hogan, Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies, Minerals Minister Susan Shabangu, Evaluation and Monitoring Minister in the Presidency Collins Chabane, Energy Minister Dipuo Peters, Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan, Minister of Transport Sbu Ndebele, Minister of Human Settlements Tokyo Sexwale and senior officials from various government departments. A large South African business delegation also travelled to Angola to join Zuma. The visit takes place within the context of efforts aimed at consolidating strategic bilateral and economic relations between the two countries. (DFA Briefing, 17 August)

DICO Minister Hosts Timor-Leste Counterpart

¶3. (U) Nkoana-Mashabane hosted Dr. Zacarias da Costa at the presidential guest house on Monday August 17. Dr. da Costa is visiting SA on official visit within the context of South-South relations between the two countries. The bilateral meeting between the two ministers was aimed at exploring and identifying areas of cooperation for the benefit of both nations. The South African Government (SAG) played a role in assisting with nation building in East Timor. The SAG has offered assistance in reconstruction and development, good governance and youth education. (DFA Briefing, 16 August)

Zuma Expected to Visit Zimbabwe

¶4. (U) An expected meeting between members of the unity government to discuss current challenges failed to materialize. Zuma plans to visit Zimbabwe before month's end before stepping down as Southern Africa Development Community chairman early next month. Zuma is also expected to open the annual Harare Agricultural Show on August 17. (Business Day, August 17)

Domestic News

15. (U) Zuma has warned African National Congress (ANC) mayors and councilors that there is no room for complacency in his government. The President met with mayors, councilors, the Free State ANC provincial executive committee, and regional leadership to discuss recent service delivery protests in the country. He told the leaders they would be dismissed if they failed to deliver. The Independent Democrats (ID) welcomed Zuma's meeting, ID Member of Parliament Joe Mgluwa said they hope the president's attempt to align provincial and local government programs with national government will assist in service delivery. (The Citizen, August 16, 2009)

Service Delivery Protestors Arrested

16. (U) Seventy-eight service delivery protesters were arrested on Monday night in Kgakala Township. More than 500 people barricaded roads, burnt tires and threw stones at the police. The protesters Qroads, burnt tires and threw stones at the police. The protesters were expected to appear in the Leeudoringstad Magistrate's Court this week to be formally charged with public violence. North West Senior Superintendent Lesego Metsi says the protesters met their provincial MEC for local government last week, but were not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting. (The Star, August, 18, 2009)

Zuma Launches National Comprehensive Rural Development Program

17. (U) Zuma launched the National Comprehensive Rural Development Program in Muyexe village in Giyani-Thohoyandou. The program is a joint venture between the government and private sector. Earlier this year the government pledged millions of dollars to improve the lives of people through development in rural areas. Twenty-one projects have been identified by the community, with the help of the Mopani municipality, to benefit local people. The capital raised will be used for infrastructure such as upgrading and refurbishing

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of agricultural colleges, training, advisory services and marketing centers. The program is earmarked as the main tool of the Public Works Department to create 500,000 jobs before the end of the year as promised by Zuma. (Sowetan, August, 18, 2009)

Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) Youth Protest

18. (U) IFP members disrupted traffic on Tuesday morning August, 17, 2009 as they demonstrated outside the party offices in Durban. The IFP Youth Brigade has accused the party of paternalism and unilateral decision-making. This follows the expulsion of three youth leaders last week. (SABCNEWS, August, 17, 2009)

Opposition Backs Mosenke for Chief Justice

19. (U) Three opposition parties, the Democratic Alliance (DA), the Congress of the People (COPE) and the Independent Democrats (ID) this week Zuma to reconsider his nomination for chief justice. The parties urged Zuma to give the job to Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Mosenke. In a joint statement the opposition said Mosenke has been groomed for the position of chief justice for four years and has all the experience required for it. Earlier this month the DA, Cope and ID wrote to Zuma, complaining that he had ignored the Constitution by only inviting their comment after nominating Judge Sandile Ngcobo. (Mail and Guardian, August 19, 2009)

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